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ANDERSEN ALUMNI™

Straight Thoughts, Straight Talk

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Editorial

It is hard to believe 2102 is coming to a close. We are in the final quarter of the year and it will prove to be an exciting one. We are three weeks out from the November elections. At this point it is a toss-up.

It seems that the world's economy is muddling along. The list of uncertainties continues to grow and this is weighing on the various economies. From the Euro-crisis, to Mideast tensions, to the US debt crisis to the upcoming US election, it seems we keep adding to the list and nothing goes away. That will change in a few weeks when the US election will be concluded. I am hopeful that the mere fact that we will know who will lead the US for the next four years will strike one uncertainty off the list. Perhaps that will be enough to tilt the scales in a more positive direction.

I want to encourage you to take the time to read the feature article in this edition. Ed Meirs' article on the *Science of Networking* has a great list of best practices that will enhance your networking skills. As my career progresses, I have found that I rely on my professional network more and more. This list reminded me of actions and behaviors that I should practice to maintain and grow my network. John Blumberg's article on *The Construct of Self-Destruction* will remind you to focus on what is really important. The third article by Gabrielle Wallace of St Charles is a great article on the attributes of a great consultant (or any business leader for that matter). If you would like to contribute a relevant article just contact admin@andersenalumni.com Subject title "Possible News Article."

As always, we need your help to further strengthen and maintain our Andersen Alumni network. Please leverage our Social Media Presence and **LIKE** our Facebook page at http://www.facebook.com/pages/Andersen-Alumni/182112725168442 and **JOIN** our LinkedIn network at http://www.linkedin.com/e/gis/38306/6E0CB25BC94E and lastly you can **FOLLOW** us at http://www.linkedin.com/company/andersen-alumni-association?trk=tabs_biz_home. Until next year, have a great Fall and upcoming holiday season.

Sincerely,
Kirk Hancock

The Art (and Science) of Networking

by Ed Maier, *Former Andersen Partner*

I'll bet you are already unexcited about this topic. Why? ***Because you are tired of hearing it***! Are you going through career or job transition? Are you developing customer relationships – with new targets or existing customers? Speakers constantly harp at you from podiums, at coaching and mentoring meetings, at leadership development seminars and at client relationship building seminars – network, network, network!

There are many formal definitions of networking. My own is straightforward and simple. Networking is purposefully connecting with people. We connect with people for a variety of reasons -- to help them, to learn about them, to learn about others they know, and to learn about their organization. Our purposes for doing so are to land an interview, to find a job, to seek advice, to sell a product or service and to meet others and build relationships.

First and foremost, networking should focus on what we can do to help others. Service to others should be our primary consideration. As you meet with individuals I encourage you to listen and respond to the following: "What unique issue is he dealing with that I can help him solve by offering suggestion or solution?" or "What problem is she facing that I can help her with – either from my own background or by suggesting she connect with someone else?" Your follow-up can be as complex as helping someone strategize on how to connect with a specific organization; or as simple as suggesting a good book to read to help them analyze their problem.

Of course, we also network for our own purposes. We attend association meetings to expand on our professional relationships. We go to a favorite club to seek out social relationships. When we are in career or job transition, we network to meet people who can help us with our search – by sharing ideas, by sharing leads, by brainstorming potential contacts and by securing informational interviews. We network to identify potential customers, to promote our products and services, to identify potential people who can help us solve a problem. We network for a variety of reasons. But, we should always have the "end in mind" of helping those we meet. We pay it forward.

Networking is almost always done face-to-face. With social media today, such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, we certainly can communicate quickly and virtually. But in-person networking is still one of the richest forms of communication.

Here are some tips I have found helpful when networking:

- Develop a plan. Put some thoughts together on what you would like to accomplish for each networking session you have. Consider the following in your plan:
    - Gather background information on the nature of the group – what do they represent, why do they get together, who is most likely to attend?
    - Try to obtain a list of attendees in advance and identify specific people you would like to meet.
    - Prepare some thoughts and ideas for the people who are most likely to be in attendance at the meeting; this puts you in the "How can I help you?" mode.

    - Summarize your objectives; what would you like to learn or accomplish from the people you meet? Have two or three in mind.
- When networking, be specific. But don't be so specific that you box out the potential answers of others by asking them strictly closed-end (Yes or No) questions. For example, assume you are networking for job transition. You are attending a meeting which might include people that work with or are familiar with one of your target companies. After breaking the ice and getting into the flow of the conversation, consider asking specific questions such as:
    - Do you happen to know anyone who works in the engineering department at XYZ?
    - If not, do you know anyone who works at XYZ that might help me connect with someone in the engineering department?
    - There are several other businesses in our community that are similar to XYZ – such as ABC, 123, etc. Do you happen to know anyone who works at anyone of these companies?
    - If you get a positive response to any of these questions, don't just say "thank you". Ask if they can provide you with an introduction, even if only by email. Hold them to their commitment. If you have not heard back in a few days, follow up. If they do not feel they can make an introduction, ask their thoughts on how you might reach out to your target.
- Create your "elevator speech" and practice it. This is your commercial; your statement of your brand. It should be about 60-90 seconds long. Divide up the content to give the listener approximately 1/3 about who you are and 2/3 about what you can do for them or their organization
- Practice great listening skills. Reframe comments they make or repeat them back in order to demonstrate you are listening. Work hard to have the other person talk more about themselves. Ask questions to clarify points. Provide good feedback when necessary. Use each networking opportunity as a chance to learn.
- Maintain good eye contact. Don't let your eyes wander around the room. I have had the embarrassing moment of being called on the carpet by a senior executive who believed I was not giving him my full attention in a networking conversation. He said my eyes were wandering all over the place and that I was not looking at him. He said he felt like I was not paying attention and was more interested in finding someone more important than him. I did not even realize I was doing it. I stammered out an apology and worked harder to focus on his suggestion. He was courteous enough to continue our conversation and, at the end, I thanked him for pointing that my deficiency. We went on to develop a solid working relationship.
- Many people do a great job of the conversational part of networking. But they don't follow through. Always follow-up on opportunities to connect with others.
- Know when to stop talking; know when to leave the conversation. Leave the conversation gracefully and politely. But also do it firmly so that your listener doesn't end up "hanging on". I find that many of us are uncomfortable in breaking off a networking conversation. Personally, I believe the direct approach is the best. So, I like to thank people for their time and excuse myself to circulate the room and meet some others. Generally, the separation occurs very naturally.

- Dress appropriately. In my years in business, I have seen a dramatic change in what is acceptable dress in the workplace. I accept that fact. Different businesses have different dress codes that fit their culture. If they are successful, who am I to challenge their policies? But when you go to a function outside of your company, if you cannot inquire about the dress code for the function, I believe you should "dress up" more than you usually would. Strive to be dressed one level above the majority of the group. Call me old-fashioned, but business networking functions are no place for flip-flops, shorts, t-shirts, hole-y blue jeans, and shoes that don't look like they have been polished since the animals walked off the ark!
- Exchange appropriate business information with the people you meet. Offer business cards or resumes. I cannot tell you how many times I hear people say "Oh, I forgot my business cards." First of all, if you forgot your business cards or resumes, make sure you get theirs. Upon returning to your home or office, put them in your contact file. Send them an email with your contact information and thank them for the conversation.
- I am forgetful. In order to minimize the risk of forgetting my business cards, I make sure one pocket of every jacket I wear has a small supply of business cards. I keep mine in the left pocket; I put those I receive in the right pocket. For my women business friends, I suggest you keep a small supply of business cards in each purse you own. And, when you switch purses, just leave them in the purse you emptied. They will be there the next time you use it. In addition, you will always have some at a random social event. I also keep a set in my car's glove compartment, in each briefcase or portfolio I use and even in my golf bag!
- When you have a networking experience in which someone does something for you, or connects you with someone else, or just takes the time to provide you with some good ideas, send them a timely thank-you note. I won't debate whether they should be text messages, emails, typed letters or personal notes. Do whatever you prefer, whatever fits your personal style. But always thank others for the help they give you.
- We all know the Golden Rule or some version of it: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." One version I suggest you adopt for your own needs is: "Return the phone calls and email messages of others as you would have them return yours." If you leave a message and state that you would like a response, you should follow-up with them until you get it. You should also respond to those who ask you for follow-up. Even if it is to say "No".
- Develop a tracking method to self-monitor your networking activities. There are a variety of tools available to you from electronic spreadsheets to software programs to business card storage containers to post-it notes. Develop one that fits your style. Review it periodically to maintain contact with people.
- And last, but not least, as my dear mom still reminds me, always be polite – remember to say "Please" and "Thank You".

I hope you find these tips helpful. As always, I am interested in your thoughts. Please share them with me at ed@thinkstraighttalkstraight.com. Good Luck and Good Networking!

The Construct of Self-Destruction **by John Blumberg** *is an Andersen Alumni and a full-time professional speaker and author who speaks with organizations who want to strengthen their core values and turn their people into better leaders. You can learn more about John at* www.keynoteconcepts.com

What started as a TV series, from 1966 to 1973, became a box office phenomenon in the years to follow. While the filming and story lines became more sophisticated, the theme song never changed. As soon as you hear the name, it is quite possible you immediately hear the song in your head. It's *Mission Impossible*. It's also quite possible you remember the famous line: *This tape will self-destruct in five seconds!*

And without fail, it always did.

In the case of *Mission Impossible*, self-destruction was a good thing. The self-destruction was, ironically, a form of preservation of the information. It works the opposite when it comes to core values and leadership. Core values become your preservation from self-destruction.

The problem, in a world of speed and our sophisticated ability to mechanically measure things, core values are sometimes inconvenient. In my book, *GOOD to the CORE*, I stated *"having core values will cost you."* There is no question about it. And individuals who specifically understand their own personal core values know this cost. So do values-based organizations.

They also know the value that values bring.

One of the most important values of knowing our core may very well be the role they play in working against the construct of self-destruction. While not impossible, the construction of our core ultimately makes it much harder to focus on our own self. It is a bit of a paradox in which we find that knowing our core values is not about us at all. While our core values do define who we are, they actually put into play why and how we show-up for our work and for others.

You might need to ponder that for a minute to see if it rings true for you. Yet, I can't remember the last time someone described a personal or organizational core value to me that sounded self-serving. Hence they become our greatest protection from the construct of our own self-destruction. For the seeds of self-destruction are planted in self-focus.

Looking into our core keeps us looking out.

Self-destruction is different than failure. It is much worse. Failure can sometimes be caused by external forces. Self-destruction is not. In fact, we can self-destruct in the midst of what appears to be incredible success. The stats may very well prove that most self-destruction takes hold in the midst of experiencing success. Probably because success can easily seduce us into self-focus. It is in knowing our core that we can continue looking outward in the midst of success.

Another image you likely remember from the *Mission Impossible* series is the lighting of the fuse. That is where the music begins. Success, without understanding the specifics of our core, is like lighting the fuse of self-destruction. It only becomes a matter of time. My quote in *GOOD to the CORE* did start with *"having core values will cost you."* But the quote finished with *"but not having them will destroy you."* Once the fuse is lit, it is just a timing issue.

So why do so many organizations and their leaders virtually remain coreless? First, most are not aware of their condition. They assume they do know their core. Second, without intention, empty words have been positioned as the veneer of their core. Third, it is easier to write-off the value of values because in doing so it demands nothing from us. Fourth, and the case for most, it simply is not easy to define your core.

But it is not impossible!

As an individual and an organization, your mission (should you choose to accept it) is to specifically define your core. Otherwise, something more important than a tape will self-destruct. It may not be in five-seconds, but it will be just a matter of time.

What does it take to be a Great Consultant?

By Gabrielle Wallace, Consultant with St. Charles Consulting Group, and former Director of Andersen's Education for Financial Assurance Services,

In today's business environment, if you are committed to creating a meaningful impact with the work that you do, I assert that you must approach each business situation as a consultant, whether you have an internal or external role. When you have clients to serve, your ability to do the necessary – identify their needs and implement the right solution – is critical to success, but it's not everything, and it's definitely not sufficient to make you a Great Consultant.

Let's take a closer look at what those ingredients are. But, before we get there …

What makes me a credible source on this subject?

With nearly 20 years in the talent development field, I spent the first half of my career at Andersen, holding positions from staff through director, and I've spent the last several years of my career as an external consultant. In addition, I’ve worked with many other external consultants and individuals in internal roles, which has provided me with an opportunity to observe the good, the bad, and (definitely) the ugly. Lastly, I grew up with a father who was a senior executive of a major corporation and was thus a client of many consultants (including Andersen), and I vividly remember his rants about “those damn consultants … They steal my watch to tell me what time it is!” Needless to say, my dad’s insights on what he liked and disliked about the consultants he hired helped shape my views, even before my consulting career began.

Top 10 list of Great Consultant Attributes

With that intro … here is my Top 10 list of what I think it takes to be a Great Consultant. And the attributes are listed in no particular order. Why? Because, to be a Great Consultant, you need them all.

1. **Opinionated**- The first and foremost thing a consultant needs to have is an informed opinion or, in more “consultantese,” a point of view (POV). What is your take on the situation given your experience and expertise? Or, as many clients wonder, what can you tell me that I don’t already know? After all, that’s why you’ve been hired – to provide a unique look at the situation that takes into account your knowledge of how this problem has been approached by others, what’s worked or hasn’t worked in similar situations, and what critical things may not have been considered yet. Your POV is something you develop over many years and is a combination of your expertise and your experience. Be confident in sharing your POV with clients, but be careful to temper it with some of the other tips below. (You really want your client to believe that you are “knowledgeable,” not “opinionated.”) Most importantly, if you have a carefully considered POV, you won’t ever need to steal someone’s watch to tell them what time it is.
2. **Pragmatic**- One of the biggest faults I see with consultants is taking a purist view of their field of expertise and, when I have the chance, I tell them that what works in textbooks doesn’t usually work in the real world. Models and frameworks are great, but you need to bring things down to a practical level and consider how to actually design and implement solutions for your clients. To do this, it’s important to look at things from all angles and play out the possible solutions from the top down and the bottom up. How does this impact Sue the accountant and Bob in HR? Consider the unintended effects it will have on work, morale, and any other important aspects of the work environment. A

practical approach, informed by appropriate theories, will help ensure the best outcome for your client and will often set you apart from others.

3. **Passionate –** No faking here, you've got to really care about helping your clients. It's obvious when someone is doing a job just for the money or takes a passive, careless approach to the work. A Great Consultant gets invested in the client's issues and gets excited at the prospect of making a difference. Finding passion in your work is something you can't force, and you may need to turn things around – find out first what you're passionate about and then make that your professional focus.
4. **Resilient –** We all have bad days. We all hit brick walls. What distinguishes Great Consultants, however, is the ability to pick themselves up by the bootstraps when things aren't going well, motivate the team, and keep helping the client to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Some problems are easily solved, and others take some time. The right solution may come after long days, much rework, and many iterations. If you get some tough feedback or experience a setback along the way, you've got to be resilient and bounce back. Don't let them get you down!
5. **Business-minded –** An area that many consultants in the Talent Development arena lack is business acumen. Understanding how a business operates, what drives decisions, and what makes the industry unique really sets consultants apart. If you don't know the basics of the balance sheet or P&L statement, it will be next to impossible for you to connect the dots on how your work will impact the client's bottom line. Even a simple appreciation for key business drivers, risks, and the financial aspects of your client's business will suggest that you "get it" and that you bring a seasoned business perspective to the work.
6. **Professional –** Consultants should hold themselves to the highest standards of ethics, confidentiality, and integrity. By virtue of your role, you will likely see and hear a lot, and it's imperative for your clients to trust you. Also, just because something is within the letter of the law doesn't make it right… Hold yourself to standards beyond what's expected. In addition, always present a professional demeanor. Don't get your feathers ruffled. Look calm even if below the water your feet are paddling like mad!
7. **Curious (but skeptical) -** Ask questions, listen, and be professionally skeptical. As a consultant, your value comes in asking the tough questions, culling out the inconsistencies, and driving to the root causes. Realize that being inquisitive may sometimes be annoying but it gets results. Keep in mind that your client may not be able to see the issues as you see them. As more of an independent party, you can be objective and avoid being clouded by politics and other confounding factors that may surround a problem.

8. **Resourceful –** Know when to enlist help. None of us is an expert in everything, and you should always know: 1) when it's time to bring in reinforcements, and 2) where to go to find them. Actively maintain a network of talented people in your area of expertise and in other, related areas where you might need help. Use the abundance mentality – there's plenty of work out there. So, if you share your opportunity with others, not only will the client benefit from the combination of strong minds at work on their project, but reciprocal opportunities may come to you.
9. **Influential**- Your ability to influence may be as important as your expertise (if not more so). If you can't get your client or other stakeholders to buy into the plan, idea, or strategy, then the forward movement stops there. Great Consultants know how to be savvy and navigate situations with dexterity. Some tips on influence: Read between the lines, and know who your allies and potential adversaries are. Enlist the allies, and work on softening the adversaries… Never go into a meeting or presentation without pre-meeting with key stakeholders to socialize the topic… You know you've been successful when you make your client look good. So, let your idea be theirs. The important thing, above all, is that you get to the right solution.
10. **Strategic (and tactical) –** Seeing the big picture and connecting dots may be some of the most important value you bring to your clients. They are in the thick of things and being pulled in various directions. You are in the unique position of being able to step back and look at the whole system or situation. Some tips along this line: If your client's organization is silo'd and you have line of sight into multiple areas, you can help them by seeing across organizational lines. You can also help them look ahead and think beyond the here and now. Their immediate objective may be to fix today, but they'll thank you if you're also thinking about tomorrow. Lastly, being strategic is great, but you also need to be tactical – to focus on effective organization and successful execution.

Well, these are some of my views after almost two decades in the trenches, and it may be the case that what it takes to be a Great Consultant varies somewhat by situation and by individual. My goal is to toss out some ideas and get you thinking on areas where you may be able to step up your game. And, if as a fellow consulting veteran you've got other perspectives that I didn't highlight, then bring 'em on, and we'll share them with others.

In the final analysis, if each of us strives to make a difference and do the best we can for our clients, then we're all one step closer to making differences that matter in the workplace.

Home Safety: 5 Steps to Greater Security

From our Friends at Liberty Mutual, where Alumni average saving more on their insurance cost (see Alumni Benefits below for more details)

You spend a lot of time in your home. And most likely, you spent a lot of money to get it. So practicing home safety is essential to protect you, your family and your property. Take these five steps and you're on your way to a safer, more secure home. (Read more)

1. **Practice fire safety**. Place smoke detectors throughout your home, test them each month, and re-install batteries twice a year. Plan an escape route from each room and hold fire drills both night and day. Discard electrical appliances with worn cords or that overheat. Learn how to extinguish cooking fires.

2. **Make your home "fall-proof**." Use a step stool to reach high cabinets. Illuminate porches, hallways and stairways. Repair cracks and remove ice and snow in walkways. Install rubber mats or safety strips in bathtubs and showers. Repair loose carpeting.

3. **Prepare for emergencies**. If your location is susceptible to wildfires, floods, earthquakes, hail or windstorms, research safety information with detailed instructions on preparing your home in advance, assembling an emergency kit, and planning an evacuation.

4. **Test for carbon monoxide**. You can't smell it, and that's the problem. CO can have fatal consequences if it goes undetected, so it's best to install CO alarms around your home as you would smoke detectors.

5. **Prevent burglaries during vacations**. Suspend mail and newspaper delivery, lock doors and windows, install motion detector lights, set light timers in a few rooms and, if affordable, purchase a home security system.

For more information, please visit us at www.libertymutual.com/andersenalumni. In Georgia, please contact Eric Sheredy at 770-935-5953 ext. 55676 or via email at Eric.Sheredy@LibertyMutual.com

Andersen Alumni Benefits

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Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Lenovo to provide discounted savings on Lenovo Product Purchases.

Lenovo is offering 15% off the everyday public web price on ThinkPad X230, 20% off Consumer K, Q, and H Series Desktops and A, B and C Series All In One's and 25% off S2110, U Series, Z Series use eCoupon **USXOCT2012** at checkout and save! Go to http://www.lenovo.com/andersen

Liberty Mutual

Andersen Alumni Association has partnered with Liberty Mutual, the nation's fifth-largest auto and home insurer. Through Liberty Mutual's Group Savings Plus® program, Andersen alumni may save up to 10 percent on their auto insurance and 5 percent on their home, condo or renters insurance*. That can be hundreds of dollars back in your pocket. Plus Liberty Mutual offers their customers who have both auto and home policies an attractive added multi-policy discount.

In addition to discounts, Group Savings Plus® offers Andersen Alumni:

- The freedom to purchase insurance the way you want: through a personal sales representative at more than 400 offices countrywide, a toll-free telesales center, or online.
- Convenient payment by automatic checking account deduction or direct billing to your home
- 24-hour toll-free claims service
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Pure Web Development

Did you know that 84% of Americans have cell phones? Huge numbers now use mobile phones to get online instead of desktop computers and by 2012 smart phones are set to outpace sales of desktop computers. Currently all major American carriers are providing 3G and in some instances 4G connections at speeds up to 12Mbps.

The way we access the internet is evolving and it is vital that your web presence and the way you present your products/services/information online adjusts with it. Now is a perfect time to get your website into the hands of these new internet users or maybe just enhance it with a custom application for use on the iPhone or Android phones.

Contact us today and find out if your website is mobile ready and what it would take to get it there. Special pricing will be extended to all Andersen Alumni members!

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Social Media: Association's LinkedIn Group (Join) and Company (Follow) and Facebook Fan Page (Like)

Social Media is a great way for us to stay connected. To request the Association Status be added to your Linked in Profile click on the following URL to JOIN:
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